

## **Re-thinking relevant 'problems' for inquiry and the role of the student in globalized higher education**

In this presentation we will explore what makes a 'good' educational problem – that is, what is worth inquiring into in an educational context - and who contributes to defining that problem; who or what are the communities that have an interest in the problem? We do this specifically in relation to the existential challenges facing the world today and the relationship between the global north and south. Fundamentally, what makes a good problem and who should define it, relates to the basic question: what is the purpose of higher education?

We summarise the way problems of inquiry are - and were - defined in students' project work at Roskilde University and the responsibility of the students in this process. We then situate this way of conceptualising educational problems in relation to two contemporary policy drivers influencing European higher education that aim to maintain the dominance of Europe and the Global North: the European Union as the leading knowledge economy, and the rise of nationalist and xenophobic politics. This is followed by a third policy context that raises questions about the purpose of higher education – the global existential threats of water and food security, climate change, violent conflict, and the rise of racism and xenophobia. Using a case study of student experience of engaging with educational problems at RUC, we ask what does it mean, in the context of global existential threats, to define educational problems and who has an interest in the defining of these problems (who are the communities of interest)?